

## Today's News - Monday, June 2, 2014

- ANN Feature: Belogolovsky brings us a lively, thoughtful conversation he had with Vignelli "infused with his sincerity, wisdom, and, of course, his sense of style."
- Sorkin offers a long take on the importance of architectural criticism: "I see criticism as a service profession - the question to be asked is whose interests are served."
- Heathcote gets us ready for the Biennale with a fascinating take on the Giardini pavilions - "each attempting to say something serious and legible about the nation that built them. They represent extremes of hubris, humility and hope."
- Three NYC architects discuss working on post-Soviet projects, offering "a taste of the contradictions inherent to working in a former Soviet satellite."
- Toderian tackles the tall tower debate that he thinks is becoming more about dogma than the real issues, like "the quality of tower and neighborhood design."
- Baillieu cheers U.K. universities' "spending spree" on new buildings, but the "architecture is less important" than how it looks in marketing brochures - it is "uninspiring, prosaic and capable of damaging the very image it's trying to sell." ("There are exceptions, of course.")
- Architecture students imagine Washington, DC's skyline with skyscrapers (and they're compared to the Taliban??!!? Give us a break!).
- Hightower delves into "the way Texas' tight oil boom is affecting the built environment" (man camps included) - it's not a pretty picture (and it doesn't bode well for the future, either).
- King, on a brighter note, cheers the transformation of a once "stark and bleak" senior care facility in Palo Alto reborn as a boutique hotel with "dynamic flair - the design testifies to the virtues of recycling."
- Brussat revisits Ranalli's "gem" of a community center in Brooklyn: what makes it "unique" is "its beauty...a 'third way' between traditional and modernist design."
- Ransford calls for moving beyond "guesses and innuendo" when it comes to the debate on housing regulation and the role of foreign investment - use data and facts "to cut through all of the superfluous issues and get to the questions that really matter. They are not simple questions."
- Gallagher is heartened by efforts to rescue and preserve architects' drawings, models, and business records that often wind up in a dumpster: "A community that throws away its past probably doesn't have much of a future, either."
- Hough understands that urban landscapes now must deal with resiliency, but "does beauty still matter?" It "may still be a goal, but is increasingly hard to find within in all of the diagrams and flow charts."
- Landscape master Haag, "a spirited environmentalist, civic activist, teacher, and captivating storyteller," is the newest story teller in TCLF's video oral history project.
- Another great take on the bus shelter project in the tiny Austrian village of Krumbach "that has given its 1,000 inhabitants unique bragging rights - they've got the best bus shelters in the world."
- Jacobs talks to material experts re: what happened with Willis Tower's glass observation deck cracking: glass is "unpredictable," susceptible to "catastrophic failure."
- One can only hope the same won't happen with the glass-bottomed Glacier Skywalk in the Canadian Rockies.
- An impressive group takes home the Zumtobel Group Award 2014.

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**ANN Feature: One-on-One: A Cult of Objectivity: Interview with Massimo Vignelli:** A conversation at Vignelli's home in Manhattan in 2012 is infused with his sincerity, wisdom, and, of course, his sense of style. By Vladimir Belogolovsky-ArchNewsNow

**Critical Mass: Why Architectural Criticism Matters:** By seeing beyond the glittering novelty of form, it is criticism's role to assess and promote the positive effects architecture can bring to society and the wider world...I see criticism...as a service profession...the question to be asked is whose interests are served... By Michael Sorkin- Architectural Review (UK)

The end of architecture? As the 14th edition of the Venice Biennale of Architecture prepares to open, the pavilions of the Giardini might be the perfect venue for an analysis of the architectural manifestations of national identity...a series of buildings each attempting to say something serious and legible about the nation that built them. They represent extremes of hubris, humility and hope. By Edwin Heathcote -- Alvar Aalto; Carlo Scarpa; Gerrit Rietveld; Josef Hoffmann; Aleksey Schusev; Edwin Rickards; Sverre Fehn; Géza Maróti; Rem Koolhaas - Financial Times (UK)

Inside the Post-Soviet Projects of Three American Architects: ...opportunities to shape post-Soviet skylines often involve introducing concepts that are taken for granted back home...a taste of the contradictions inherent to working in a former Soviet satellite..."somewhere along the line these countries are going to develop their own architecture." -- Lee H. Skolnick Architecture + Design Partnership; Dan Kaplan/FXOWLE Architects; Henry Myerberg/HMA2 [images]- Curbed

Tall Tower Debates Could Use Less Dogma, Better Design: When it comes to tall buildings, there's a lot of dogma out there among urbanists, in both directions. Lets spend more time and attention on the quality of tower and neighbourhood design, rather than on how tall the buildings are. By Brent Toderian/Toderian UrbanWORKS -- James Kunstler; Leon Krier; Jan Gehl; Edward Glaeser- PLANetizen

University challenge: Universities might have billions to splash on new buildings but they need to set their ambitions a whole lot higher: ...£9 billion spending spree...They are big bold buildings, but they are also safe and office-like...Creative endeavour is spent on the image and the name...so it looks impressive on marketing brochures...but its architecture is less important...uninspiring, prosaic and capable of damaging the very image it's trying to sell. By Amanda Baillieu- BD/Building Design (UK)

Architecture Students Design a Post-Height Act DC: Students at Catholic University of America School of Architecture and Planning imagined Washington's skyline with skyscrapers. Height Act defenders compared them to the Taliban... "Tall DC: New Monumentalism" on view at the Sigal Gallery/District Architecture Center/AIADC [images]- Washington Post

Comment> The Architecture of Fracking: ...the way Texas' tight oil boom is affecting the built environment: In just a few short years, small towns...have seen their populations explode...developed sprawling edges of suburban development...the boom has given rise to at least one new building typology—the man camp...Managing this sort of rapid growth is difficult, but planning for a post-boom future is harder still. By Brantley Hightower/HiWorks [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

Palo Alto building moves from senior care to dynamic flair: ...one of the few cities in America where an eight-story senior care facility, stark and bleak...could be reborn as a boutique hotel...the architectural moral of the story applies across the American landscape: Almost any sound structure can be given a new lease on life, often in a way that's more attractive than before...the design testifies to the virtues of recycling. By John King -- Steinberg Architects [images]- San Francisco Chronicle

Rec center's 'third way' in Brooklyn: ...Saratoga Avenue Community Center...a gem of a building attached to a typically appalling housing block...part of a regrettably brief effort by the housing authority to refine its designs for civic architecture. What was unique...was its beauty...a "third way" between traditional and modernist design. By David Brussat -- George Ranalli [images]- Providence Journal (Rhode Island)

Any debate on housing regulation should begin with the facts: Data: Guesses and innuendo have no place in discussion over role of foreign investment...Primary data...will allow us to cut through all of the superfluous issues — many of them arising from veiled racism, bigotry and emotional reactions to perceived threats of community and social change — and get to the

questions that really matter. They are not simple questions. By Bob Ransford- Vancouver Sun

Saving our past, one architectural record at a time: ...many architects and firms are too busy seeking the next job to worry about saving past records...their records often wind up in the Dumpster...Saving architectural drawings, models, business records...has both a practical use and a more ethereal purpose...A community that throws away its past probably doesn't have much of a future, either. By John Gallagher -- William Kessler; Minoru Yamasaki; Albert Kahn; Gunnar Birkerts; Eiel Saarinen- Detroit Free Press

Does Beauty Still Matter? The design of urban landscapes has become dominated by a growing call for them to be ecologically resilient. But isn't it important what they look like? ...what we are seeing today are highly technical and scientific-based proposals. Beauty may still be a goal, but is increasingly hard to find within in all of the diagrams and flow charts. By Mark Hough- PLANetizen

Pioneers of American Landscape Design: Richard Haag: The Cultural Landscape Foundation just launched their newest video oral history project...a spirited environmentalist, civic activist, teacher, and captivating storyteller. [videos]- Land8

When seven renowned architects design bus shelters, the results are fantastical: Few people may have ever heard of Krumbach...the tiny village in western Austria...it's garnering international attention for a project that has given its 1,000 inhabitants unique bragging rights – they've got the best bus shelters in the world...proof that you can make something as mundane as a bus shelter architecturally inspiring, even poetic. -- Sou Fujimoto; Smiljan Radic; Wang Shu/Lu Wenyu/Amateur Architecture Studio; Antón Garcí-Abril/Débora Mesa/Ensamble Studio; Rintala Eggertsson Architects; De Vylder Vinck Taillieu/dvvt; Alexander Brodsky [images]- Globe and Mail (Canada)

The Truth About Building With Glass: ...tourists stepped onto Willis Tower's The Ledge, a glass observation deck 103 stories above Chicago, and the floor splintered beneath their feet. Material experts help explain what happened...glass is "unpredictable," susceptible to "catastrophic failure." By Karrie Jacobs -- Andrew Dent/Material ConneXion; Michael Ra/Front; Ross Wimer; Skidmore Owings & Merrill (SOM) [images]- Fast Company

Glass-bottom Glacier Skywalk provides new views of Columbia Icefield in the Canadian Rockies: ...impressive curved glass-floored walkway, which is suspended 280 m (918 ft) above the Sunwapta Valley. -- Sturgess Architecture [images]- Gizmag (Australia)

Zumtobel Group Award 2014: International jury nominates 15 projects in three categories -- Lacaton & Vassal architects; RMA Architects; Rural Urban Framework; Studio Tamassociati Architects; Urban-Think Tank; ArchiAid; Burgos & Garrido Arquitectos/Porras La Casta/Rubio & Á\_Sala/West 8; Elemental; Research Institute for Humanity and Nature; Turenscape; Arup Deutschland; Future Cities Laboratory/ ETH Zurich; James Ramsey; KONE; Lehm Ton Erde Baukunst [images]- Zumtobel

-- Travel guide: Barcelona: There is no city like it. It's a place of colourful contrasts. Of culture and nightlife. And truly spectacular architecture.

-- The Camera: Q&A with Thomas Mayer: How did you start being involved in architectural photography? "In fact, I always was addicted to architecture."

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